

Lithuania Priests

Talk Two

The Word of God

Renewal of the Church: I will speak of 3 dimensions essential to Church Renewal: 1. Biblical; 2. Liturgical; 3. Charismatic. So Plank 1 is Biblical Renewal. Leo XIII (1943), Pius XII (1943), Dei Verbum of Vatican Two (1965), CCC (1993) and Verbum Domini of Benedict XVI (2010). These three elements I suggest constitute the key elements for church renewal. All three help to effect this synthesis of Christian faith, without which we are living as truncated Christians.

Conciliar Constitution on Divine Revelation:

1. Jesus is “the mediator and the sum total of revelation.” (DV, 2). He is the Word of God, the one and unique Word, to whom the written Word bears witness (CCC 134). Catechism heading “Christ – The Unique Word of Sacred Scripture”.
2. “Access to Sacred Scripture ought to be widely available to the Christian faithful.” (DV 22).
3. “The sacred scriptures contain the word of God, and because they are inspired, they truly are the word of God; therefore, the study of the sacred page should be the very soul of sacred theology.” (DV 24). See CCC, 132.

Year of Faith. Faith comes by hearing the word (Rom. 10: 17). We have to hear the Word of God in the Holy Spirit. 1. Faith 2. Openness to Holy Spirit. 3. Digesting the Word. 4. Growing in Faith.

Faith is faith in God’s Word: faith in Jesus, the Word of God, faith in preached Word, and faith in written Word. “Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matt. 4: 4). “Sin as a refusal to hear the Word of God.” (VD, 26, heading).

“This is a prayer that we need to say every day: 'Holy Spirit, make my heart open to God's Word so that my heart might be open to good, so that my heart might be open to God's beauty every day.' Let me ask you: how many of you pray to the Holy Spirit every day? It will be few of you, but we must satisfy this desire for Jesus and pray every day to the Holy Spirit that He might open our hearts to Jesus.” (Pope Francis, 15 May 2013).

Process of Listening, Receiving, Affirming, Living. 1. BE CENTRED ON JESUS (Francis). 2. BE SOAKED IN THE WORD. Cefn Lea. It is the only way to know the real Jesus. Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ (St Jerome). Only when we know the real Jesus can we preach the real Jesus. Real Jesus has huge compassion for all the poor and the suffering, but severe words for hypocrites. Combination of message of mercy and of judgment. Not gentle Jesus meek and mild: chocolate box of birthday card sugar Daddy.

Life of Priest: Knowing Word of God – Preaching and Teaching the Word of God. Example of Pope Francis. Faith means **Trusting power of the Word that is in the Word**. Word has convicting power and life-giving power. Not adding our own proofs, only our own

testimony. If we preach God's Word, that comes from His Spirit, we do not have to concern ourselves about the fruit. The qn is: Am I preaching God's Word? VD, 56 on sacramentality of the Word. "The relationship between word and sacramental gesture is the liturgical expression of God's activity in the history of salvation through the *performative character* of the word itself. In salvation history there is no separation between what God says and what he does." (VD, 53).

The priest in the liturgy. Leader, president, representing Christ to the people and the people before the Father. Priest is first the gatherer and welcome (servant of unity). The homily should help to unify in the faith, as the sacrament unifies: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body because we all partake of the one bread." (1 Cor. 10: 17).

Representing Jesus is only authentic as we submit ourselves to Jesus and conform ourselves to Him. What does this mean? 1. It means submitting ourselves first to God's Word. Preaching His Word not our own ideas. Of course personalized, but God's Word not ours. 2. Submitting our personalities as we preside at Mass. Just being Christlike, not trying to project an image. In both there is a necessary kenosis and purification.

Homily: (VD, 59). Do you want to preach? Do you have a message of conviction in your heart? "The faithful should be able to perceive clearly that the preacher has a compelling desire to present Christ, who must stand at the centre of every homily." (VD, 59). Homilies as not just explanation but as "opening up" – keeping Word character – and applying now. "Homily is part of liturgy. "By means of the homily, the mysteries of the faith and the guiding principles of the Christian life are expounded from the sacred text" (CL, 52).

"how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim 3: 15).

First, prayer life nourished by the Scriptures. Dryness – may be testing from God, may just be due to spiritual starvation, no input. "Give us this day our daily bread." We need food. From both tables: the Table of God's Word (SC 51) and the Table of the Sacrament.

Faith is 1. acceptance of God who speaks, supremely and fully in his Son; 2. Of the God who calls, through his Son; 3. Of the Promises that God makes to those He calls through his Son.

Abraham, the Father of Faith (of those who believe) Rom 4: 11. Promises: Descendants, Posterity; Land.

David: Son-Posterity who will sit on throne.

Mary, the Mother of Faith: Luke 1: 45: "Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished." Promise: Son who will be great and called Son of the Most High (Luke 1: 32).

Peter and Twelve: Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. (Matt 4: 18 – 19).

Faith is highly personal and ecclesial at the same time.